Act.33

TOKYO MUNICIPAL COURTHOUSE
HAK
HAK
HAK
C
...
I'M IN YOUR DEBT, MR. KAJIYAMA
YOU STAY OUTTA HERE, GOT THAT?
HAK
HAK
HAK

heh
DON'T WORRY.
I'M THROUGH WITH DRUGS, ALL RIGHT.
YOU REALLY OKAY WITH THIS?
SINCE IT WAS A SIMPLE FIRST OFFENSE, SHINODA GOT AN EARLY RELEASE BY COURT ORDER
YUP.
YOU'VE DONE A GOOD JOB RESTRAINING YOURSELF FROM LOOKING INTO THIS ONE!
SHINODA... WAS HE THE GUY WE CAUGHT BUYING FROM THE DEALER WE BUSTED?
RESTRAINING...?

YUSUKE SHINODA, AGE 29. FREELANCE WRITER.
WE'VE DECIDED TO LET HIM GO WITHOUT THE USUAL CLOSE INVESTI-GATION.
!
HE SWORE RIGHT UP UNTIL THE END THAT HIS DRUG USE WAS ALL BY HIMSELF.
SHF
BUT IT'S PRETTY DIFFICULT TO BELIVE THAT A GUY WHO'S FAMOUS FOR WRITING ABOUT SEEDY CLUBS AND THE DRUG CULTURE DOESN'T HAVE A SINGLE JUNKIE FRIEND
WHICH IS WHERE YOU GUYS COME IN. SHINODA'S NEVER MET YOU IN HIS LIFE.
STARTING TODAY, YOU GUYS ARE GOING TO OBSERVE YUSUKE SHINODA AND CATALOGUE HIS ENTIRE NETWORK OF FRIENDS.
ARE YOU SERIOUS?
WE'LL SOUND OUT AN OPPORTUNITY TO EXPOSE EVERY LAST ONE OF THEM.
YOU OPEN A CASE ON THAT KIND OF HALF-ASSED REASONING
...AND WHAT HAPPENS IF IT GOES NOWHERE? IT'LL END UP AS NOTHING BUT A STANDARD BACKGROUND CHECK!
...NO.

NO, IT WON'T.
...

Section Chief
WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL THEM ABOUT THE ANONYMOUS TIP?
IF IT TURNS OUT TO BE TRUE...
...THEY MIGHT ACTUALLY BE HEADING INTO A DANGEROUS SITUATION.
WE DO HAVE TO LOOK INTO WHETHER OR NOT THAT TIP IS LEGIT.

I DON'T WANT THEM CONDUCTING AN INVESTIGATION WITH ANY PRECONCEPTIONS.
BUT AT THIS STAGE, IT'S NOTHING MORE THAN A SUPPOSITION FROM AN UNKNOWN, UNVERIFIED SOURCE
IF SHINODA REALLY IS INVOLVED WITH THAT "RED" BUSINESS, IT'LL COME OUT IN THE WASH.

WHAT I DO WANT IS THE TRUTH.
ALL RIGHT!
CLINK
HERE'S TO SHINODA'S TRIUMPHANT RETURN---
CHEERS!
CLINK
NICE WORK ON THAT LAST JOB.
hee
hee
slpp
OH, GIMME A BREAK.

I GOTTA ADMIT, I 'BOUT LOST IT WHEN I HEARD YOU'D BEEN HAULED IN.
C'MON, KATSUKI.
DID YOU REALLY THINK I'D SQUEAL ON MY GOOD BUDDY?
GIVE ME A LITTLE CREDIT.
sorry
sorry
BUT YOU DON'T THINK THEY'LL BE WATCHING YOU IN CASE YOU COMMIT, LIKE, A SECOND OFFENSE?
NO WAY.
THE NCD IS KINDA DULL. I MEAN...
TO BE HONEST, IT WAS A BIT OF A LETDOWN.
EVEN DURING THE QUESTIONING, I JUST KEPT DENYING THAT I HAD ANY FRIENDS INVOLVED
AND IN THE END, THEY JUST RAN OUT OF PATIENCE.
I OUTLASTED 'EM. NO SWEAT.

BWAHAHA
AND THEN THEY WERE ALL, "YOU STAY OUTTA HERE, YOU GOT THAT?"
!
shiver shiver
hmph
MR. ARAI--
BECAUSE I RESPECT MY SUPERIORS, YOU SEE, I CAN'T HELP BUT FEEL IRRITATED AT THOSE RUDE FELLOWS, THOUGH WATCHING THEM MAY BE OUR JOB.
Trying (and failing) to talk like an office worker
gulp
Blah
Blah
IS THAT SO, MR. FURUTA? ARE YOU SURE YOU DON'T HAVE SOME ISSUE WITH THIS JOB ITSELF?
UH... NOT REALLY ...
ANOTHER ROUND, PLEASE
sigh
Orange Juice

What are you doing, Mr. Aral?!
HIKI'S DEFINITELY HIDING SOMETHING, THAT BASTARD
shuu
YOU'RE DRINKING TOO MUCH AND YOU'RE SMOKING TOO MUCH!
Stop it!
I'LL THANK YOU NOT TO GET IN MY WAY.
Otherwise I'll kill you.
mmphW
grab
suu
click
"IT'LL ALL COME OUT IN THE WASH."

LOOKS LIKE HE'S ON HIS BEST BEHAVIOR. NO SURPRISE THERE.
batan
HITTING THE BAR AND HEADING STRAIGHT HOME, EH?
shuff
shuff
HOW MANY PEOPLE DO YOU THINK WE'LL HAVE TO TRACK DOWN TO ACCOUNT FOR ALL OF SHINODA'S GROUP?
squirm
squirm
WE'VE GOT HIS PARENTS LIVING ELSEWHERE, HIS YOUNGER BROTHER AND TEN-ODD PEOPLE FROM HIS JOB
PLUS HIS FRIENDS FROM SCHOOL AND THE GROUP HE HANGS OUT WITH NOW--AND THOSE'RE JUST THE ONES WE KNOW ABOUT
zzzzz
...
sorry
hmph
THE REAL PROBLEM IS THE RANDOM PEOPLE THAT SHOW UP AT THAT NAMELESS CLUB
SO WHEN'RE YOU GONNA HEAD OUT TO--

HE'S COMIN' OUT.
KACHAK
ALL RIGHT, I'M OFF!
CONTACT ME IF ANYTHING HAPPENS.
OKAY.
SUU
KACHAK

...
ICCHANA.E
LOOKS LIKE A MEETING FOR HIS WORK.
UNDER-STOOD.
Kanto Electric
Kanto Electric
I'M ALL DONE HERE.
cluk
clang

flop
SHINODA DIDN'T DO ANYTHING PARTICULARLY SPECIAL TODAY.
...EAH, PROB-ABLY.
YEAH, PROB-ABLY
HE STICKS OUT TOO MUCH.
FZZT
...DIDN'T... BETTER QUIT...THE IRANIAN...
STILL, IF WE'RE CAREFUL IT SHOULD BE OKAY.
IF YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT THE CONTENTS, I CAN INTRODUCE YOU TO A GOOD JAPANESE BUYER
YEAH, MAYBE
YEAH, MAYBE.
COMING THROUGH LOUD AND CLEAR
TOMORROW ? IN THE EVENING THEN...

...
YOU STICK TO HIM. I'LL WATCH SHINODA.
RIGHT.

twip
OH, HE'S JUST GOING TO THE BATHRO...
wump
OOF!
SORRY —

WAIT, THAT'S A MAN ?!
smells nice
OH, ME TOO ...
SORRY, SHINODA.
!
THE JAPANESE GUY I TOLD YOU ABOUT ON THE PHONE.
HUH?
AW, DON'T BE LIKE THAT. I BROUGHT HIM WITH ME, SEE?
YOU SURE TOOK YOUR TIME IN THE BATHROOM.

HE'S THE DEALER? HE LOOKS LIKE A TOTAL LOSER.
I KNOW!
ACTUALLY HISATO HERE IS STILL IN HIS TEENS!
squeaky clean!
THOSE SKINNY ARMS WOULD BE EASY TO BREAK.
HE'S YOUNGER THAN I IMAGINED.
YOU DON'T TRUST A MINOR?
NO, IT'S NOT THAT.
I'D KILL MYSELF IF THEY TRACED ME THROUGH A KID LIKE THIS.
I JUST WANNA GET THIS OVER WITH...
WHAT DO YOU WANT?
I CAN GET YOU ANYTHING.
!

IF YOU WANT SPEED, I CAN GET THAT RIGHT AWAY.
uh
UH... YEAH...
click
...

WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING ?!?
outta the way!
WHAM
BUT--!
owww!
...
twitch
Are you hurt?
shiver
GACHAK
THERE IS A LIMIT TO HOW GOOD-FOR-NOTHING YOU CAN BE!
SLAM
I LOST THEM... AND THEN I TRIED TO FIND YOU, BUT I COULDN'T... AND IT'S DARK AND I COULDN'T SEE YOUR FACE...
sorry
WHERE THE HELL WOULD WE GO EXCEPT TO FOLLOW SHINODA?!
BRAAH
...
twitch
VROOOMM
WHERE ARE WE GOING?

A HOTEL?
KREE
HAL?
Aren't we going to follow them?
HELLO?
IT'S ME.
OH...
...
AH, GOOD WORK.
WHAT'S GOING ON WITH SHINODA?
HE JUST CHECKED INTO A PRETTY NICE HOTEL WITH HIS BUDDIES.
A NICE HOTEL?
YEAH, PROBABLY TO PARTY WITH THE STUFF THEY JUST PICKED UP.
...

WE DON'T KNOW WHEN THEY'RE GONNA BE HERE AGAIN, SO I WANT TO FOLLOW THIS UP.
?
YOU'VE GOT TO HELP ME OUT.
AH HA HA.
SURE, I'LL CALL THEM UP.
WHAT'S THE HOTEL'S NAME? ...GOT IT.
GIVE MY NAME TO THE FRONT DESK IN FIVE MINUTES.
WHO DID YOU CALL?
...
beep
THE EMPEROR OF THE GODDAMN UNDER-WORLD, THAT'S WHO.
???
KACHUK

YEAH, MY FRIEND WILL BE THERE IN JUST A MINUTE.
THANKS.
AGAIN WITH YOUR WEIRD CONNEC-TIONS ...
KACHUK
IT SEEMS LIKE THE INVESTI-GATION IS GOING WELL.
SHIP
...
MASA-KATA HIKI SENT US.
MR. KURA-BAYASHI, CORRECT ?
SHF
WE'VE BEEN EXPECTING YOU.
JANGLE
...

YOUR ROOM IS NUMBER 4022. ON THE FOURTH FLOOR.
THANKS.
SLIFF
ENJOY YOUR STAY.
4023
THIS IS THE FIRST TIME YOU'VE EVER COME HERE, ISN'T IT?
Room 4075 is a twin room reserved under the name of Mr Masahito Katsuki
...

UH, YEAH... SINCE WHEN HAVE YOU GUYS BEEN DOING THIS?
SINCE YOU'VE BEEN AWAY, WE DECIDED TO BE A LOT MORE CAREFUL
RACHAK
RECENTLY WE'VE FOUND SOME NEW WAYS TO HAVE FUN, SO IT HASN'T BEEN ALL BAD.
KREEE
OTHER WAYS TO HAVE FUN?
DON'T WORRY, YOU'LL LOVE IT.
!
THE GUYS ARE ALREADY AT IT.
SUFF
SUFF
SUFF

HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
!
THEY'RE ...!
SHUP

fwup
SEE? CHECK IT OUT.
!
huff
huff
!
H-HEY, WHAT'RE YOU--
grab
AW, C'MON, SHINODA

YOU LIKED HIM WELL ENOUGH WHEN YOU SAW HIM BEFORE, RIGHT?
LET'S GIVE HIM A GO.
!
WE'LL JUST LIGHT UP SOME BUD...
...AND HAVE A GOOD TIME.
BZZT
...AND HAVE A GOOD TIME.
...

Act.34

huff
huff
huff
WE"LL JUST LIGHT UP SOME BUD AND HAVE A GOOD TIME.
PAT
!
!
TWITCH
...
HAL?

C'MON, DON'T MAKE IT HARD...
GRAB
HELP ...
HAHA HAHA HAHA
HAHA HAHA HA
SHUFF
HEY ...
YOU OUGHTTA STOP THIS...
clench
EVEN IF HE IS A DEALER, HE'S JUST A KID!
THIS GOES WAY PAST JUST SCREWING AROUND!
SHINODA, LOOK...
grab
!

DON'T HARSH THE BUZZ, MAN.
IF WE ALL DO IT TOGETHER, IT'LL BE NO BIG DEAL, RIGHT?
!
JUST HOLD STILL, KID.
--AH!
Connected
LET ME GO!
C'MON ...
KNOCK IT OFF, I SAID!
WHAM
...
LET ME GO!
...

huff
GET UP.
shuff
DON'T SCREW AROUND WITH US, BITCH!
SHINODA, WAIT!
NOW HANG ON, JUST HANG ON A SEC.
shf

TAKE IT EASY, BRO. WE'RE IN A HOTEL.
!
...
SLAM
!
SHINODA LEFT.
jingle
!
YOU TAIL SHINODA.
I'LL STAY HERE.

DON'T SWEAT IT.
4023
SHINODA JUST GOT OUT, SO HE'S GONNA BE TWITCHY ABOUT ALL KINDS OF STUFF.
...
OKAY.
pat
pata
TCH
BESIDES --
HE'S NOT GONNA WANT TO GET BUSTED AGAIN FOR CAUSING A RUCKUS IN A PLACE LIKE THIS
FINE, FINE. YOU GUYS ARE A TOUGH CROWD
shuff
THIS IS ALL YOUR FAULT, KATSUKI, BRINGING SHINODA ALONG.
GO GET US SOME SECONDS OR SOME-THING.
DAMMIT, I WAS ALL HOT TOO.
--I WONDER IF HE REALLY FELL FOR THE KID... WITH THAT FACE AND ALL.
KIAK

flip
UNTIL WE GET SOMEONE ELSE, YOU WANNA TRY SOME OF THE RED ONES?
HEY, SWEET. SORRY FOR ALWAYS MOOCHIN OFF YA.
"RED ONES"?
TWITCH
fwip
!
HEY.
SWIPE
...

I'M SORRY ...
sniff
!
HOW FAR DO YOU PLAN ON FOLLOWING ME ANYWAY?
YOU CAN GO NOW, YOU KNOW.
OH...
I'M SORRY ...
H-HEY, NOW!
bleep
UM ...
GRABB
GUESS IT CAN'T BE HELPED...
HUH?
WHERE'S YOUR HOUSE?
IF IT'S NOT TOO FAR AWAY TO DRIVE, I'LL TAKE YOU HOME.

THANK YOU...
...
...
...

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN DOING IT?
HM?
DEALING DRUGS, I MEAN.
OH...
THERE ARE LOTS OF OTHER JOBS, RIGHT?
...
SHOULDN'T YOU GET OUT AFTER SOMETHING LIKE THIS?
A MONTH ?!
JUST A MONTH OR SO... A FRIEND GOT ME STARTED ...
glance
AND ANY-WAY ...
LOOK, I DON'T CARE HOW GOOD YOU SAY THE MONEY IS...

IT'S NOTHING ...
...SEEMS LIKE A GIRL.
zoom
twip
HM?
HE REALLY ...
UH, NO...
SO...
THIS IS THE WAY TO YOUR PLACE, RIGHT?
OH, YES.
shuff shuff
klik
COULD WE GO BACK TO THE HOTEL ROOM?
GASP
UM ...
YEAH?
ARE YOU CRAZY? NO.

!
IT LOOKS LIKE I LEFT MY HOUSE KEY IN THE ROOM...
What am I gonna do?
I REALLY LOST IT...
fwump
fwump
slump
SO THESE ARE, WHAT, MOSTLY UPPERS?
IT'S BACK IN THE ROOM.
YEAH.
shf

SOME FRIENDS YOU HAVE.
SINCE YOU SAVED ME, SHINODA, I'LL LET YOU HAVE 'EM CHEAP.
THANKS A HEAP.
...
shuf
HEY... YOU HAVEN'T REALLY ASKED ABOUT ME, MUCH.
WHAT'D BE THE POINT OF ASKING?
I DAMN WELL DON'T WANT TO GET INVOLVED IF I CAN HELP IT.
THANKS TO YOU, I'M IN TROUBLE WITH MY FRIENDS.
HOLDING THEM OFF WAS A ONE-TIME THING, GOT THAT?
STARTING IN THIS BUSINESS A MONTH AGO... YOU PROBABLY DON'T HAVE A CLUE HOW IMPORTANT CONNEC-TIONS ARE.
...

HUH?
I'M.. SORRY ...
...
I'M SORRY ...
...
I'M SORRY ...

...
ALL RIGHT... WELL...
SELL ME THIS ONE HERE.
Suu
?
THIS RED ONE.
OH, THAT!

IT'S THE BEST STUFF I SELL.
IT'S CALLED "RED."
WHIP
KACHAK
RED ...
HUH?
WE'RE HEADING BACK.

ALL RIGHT THEN
FLAP
HOW 'BOUT YOU EXPLAIN EVERYTHING NOW?
YOU MANAGED TO GET HERE A BIT FASTER THAN I EXPECTED!
LIKE I DAMN WELL TOLD YOU HE WOULD ...
SHF
YOU KNEW ALL ALONG THAT IF WE FOLLOWED SHINODA, RED WAS GONNA, SHOW UP, DIDN'T
DON'T BE MAD AT ME.
I DIDN'T WANT TO SEND YOU IN THERE WITH ANY PRECONCEPTIONS BY GIVING YOU UNSUBSTANTIATED IDEAS.
KAJI ---
IT LOOKS LIKE OUR THEORY HAS TURNED TO FACT.
LOOKS LIKE IT.

WHAT'S THIS "RED" STUFF ANYWAY?
IT'S A DRUG THAT STARTED CIRCULATING THIS LAST YEAR.
"RED" IS ESSENTIALLY A NICKNAME. THE STUFF'S SOLD IN THESE RED PACKAGES.
"REDS" OR "LITTLE REDDIES" ARE GENERAL TERMS FOR STIMULANTS IN RED-COLORED PILLS.
THAT'S ALL WE KNOW BASED ON WHAT WE'VE LEARNED FROM THE STUFF WE CONFISCATED IN A FEW ARRESTS.
WE DON'T KNOW MANY DETAILS.
SOUNDS PRETTY MINOR LEAGUE.
WE HAD A BREAK-THROUGH INCIDENT SIX MONTHS AGO.
HOWEVER --
!

A MAN WHO HAD OVERDOSED ON THE DRUG--
--KILLED HIS WIFE, DAUGHTER AND PARENTS BEFORE COMMITTING SUICIDE.
IT HASN'T BEEN MADE PUBLIC YET...
BUT LARGE NUMBERS OF THE RED PACKETS WERE FOUND AT HIS RESIDENCE.
USE AMONG THE YOUNGER GENERATION SEEMS TO BE RISING, PROBABLY BECAUSE OF ITS LOW PRICE.
THERE'S A STRONG POSSIBILITY OF SIDE EFFECTS SUCH AS HALLUCINATIONS DUE TO THE HIGH IMPURITY OF THE DRUG.
ONCE WE'D CONFIRMED HOW DANGEROUS IT REALLY WAS, WE STARTED AN INVESTIGATION WITH SECTION 2, BUT IT WASN'T GOING ANYWHERE.
chik
WHICH IS WHERE SHINODA'S ARREST CAME IN.

SO YOU PUT US ON A CASE WITHOUT HAVING ANY IDEA WHO THE TARGET WOULD WIND UP BEING?
WE WERE ONLY HALF CONVINCED, BUT WE DECIDED TO LET SHINODA GO AND SEE WHAT HAPPENED.
glare
IT WAS JUST AN ANONYMOUS TIP.
THE PERSON YOU'RE HOLDING, YUSUKE SHINODA, IS INVOLVED WITH RED.
Click
CHAK
SORRY ABOUT THAT.
BASED ON THE LOW CREDIBILITY OF THE TIP...
WE DECIDED THAT THE POSSIBILITY THAT YOU TWO WOULD BE PUT IN DANGER WAS RELATIVELY SMALL.
AT THE VERY LEAST, THERE WAS NO HARD PROOF THAT SHINODA HAD ANYTHING TO DO WITH RED PRIOR TO HIS ARREST.
BUT YOU TWO FOUND IT.

click
SORRY, THERE'S SOMEONE I WANT TO LOOK INTO A LOT MORE THAN SHINODA.
UM...
STARTING TODAY, SECTION 1 WILL BE TAKING OVER THE RED CASE.
I WANT YOU TWO TO CONTINUE INVESTIGATING SHINODA'S PERSONAL CONNECTIONS.
ME TOO.
I THINK THIS KID IS INVOLVED IN THE SALE OF RED.
IF WE FOLLOW HIM WE'LL BE ABLE TO FIGURE OUT THE PATH THE DRUG IS TAKING.
...

I'LL LEAVE YOU TWO TO IT.
...
BUT EXERCISE EXTREME CAUTION.
FINE THEN.
heh
WE'LL LOOK INTO THESE GUYS FROM OUR SIDE.
IF WE FIND ANYTHING OUT WE'LL CONTACT YOU IMMEDIATELY. DON'T DO ANYTHING STUPID.
nod
OKAY.
WHAT'RE YOU GRINNING ABOUT ?
SHIFF
KACHAK

THE SAME THING YOU ARE.
shff
!
rustle rustle
OH, GOOD MORNING.
YOU'RE ... YOU'RE STILL HERE ?

I'M SORRY.
I JUST WANTED TO DO SOME-THING TO THANK YOU...
SO I JUST PICKED UP SOME STUFF FOR BREAKFAST.
UH...
HEY--
SO...
...THANKS.

KAORU
...
MUSS
HM?
I SHOULD FEEL BETTER NOW... SO WHY DON'T I?
DAMMIT.
IS THIS ...?
huh
KAORU

DAMN
...
...
shuff
shuff

...
Kachik
HISATO.

WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN?
...
I'M... SORRY ...
I KNOW ALL ABOUT IT!
YOU'RE GOING TO BETRAY ME, JUST LIKE YOUR FATHER DID!
N-NO, I'D NEVER --
SMACK
!
REALLY ...
ALL MEN ARE THE SAME... I JUST ...

I WISH I'D NEVER HAD YOU!
I'M SORRY !
I'M SORRY ...
Phhh
HISATO ?
WELCOME HOME.
HAVE YOU BEEN CRYING AGAIN?
Jolt
I'M NOT CRYING.
TODAY'S SUNDAY.
WHAT ABOUT SCHOOL ?
OH, RIGHT.

SHOKI...
...
'S CHILLY DOWN HERE.
BRRR
IF YOU SLEEP ON THE FLOOR LIKE THIS, YOU'RE GONNA CATCH A COLD.
NO KIDDIN'
SNUG
IT'S SO COLD DOWN HERE I THOUGHT I WAS GONNA DIE.
...
LIKE MY BODY WAS JUST GOING TO MELT ONTO THE FLOOR.
DON'T SAY STUFF LIKE THAT.
SNUGG
!

I KNEW IT.
YOU WERE CRYING.
YUSUKE SHINODA.
I SEE ...
IT MAY TAKE A LITTLE TIME, BUT IT SHOULD BE FINE.
GOOD BOY.
grabb
SO ...?
...I MET HIM.

Act.35

YOU COULD WRITE A KIND OF DOCUMENTARY PIECE... GOING FROM DRUG USE, TO ARREST, TO FREEDOM. IT'D MAKE A GREAT ARTICLE.
WELL... I GUESS...
LIKE I SAID, SINCE YOU GOT ARRESTED AND ALL, MAYBE IT'D BE SOME GOOD EXPERIENCE FOR YOU.
HUH?
YOU'VE ALREADY ESTABLISHED YOUR NAME AS A FAMOUS DRUG WRITER.
YOU CAN'T DO THAT!
I'D HAVE TO CHANGE MY PEN NAME OR SOME-THING...
IT MIGHT BE INTERESTING, BUT I DON'T WANT THOSE BASTARDS TO HAVE THEIR EYES ON ME AGAIN.
SORRY, I'VE GOT A CALL ON THE OTHER LINE. I'LL CALL YOU BACK.
Incoming Call
VVVVV
THE OTHER LINE?
VVVVVV
VVVVVV
YOU'VE GOTTEN QUITE A REPUTATION FOR DOCUMENTING YOUR TRIPS, MAN.
WELL, Y'KNOW, COOL, BUT...

YOU GOT SOMETHING MORE IMPORTANT TO TALK ABOUT THAN YOUR WORK WITH ME?
...SORRY. I'LL CALL YOU BACK.
BEEP
VRRRRR
VRRR
...
HAL?
...
SKREE

THE PERSON GETTING OUT OF THE CAR. IS THAT ...?
SURE LOOKS LIKE IT.
BEEP
YES?
HELLO?
SHINODA?
I WONDER WHY HE CAME BACK...
SHUF
I'M GONNA FOLLOW THE DRIVER OF THAT CAR
FLAP
WE GOTTA INVESTI-GATE HIM, RIGHT?

KACHAN
...
HE'S HELPING ME OUT...
THANK GOODNESS.
I GUESS I ACTUALLY DID LEAVE MY CELL PHONE HERE.
ding dong
!
HUH ?
UH, YEAH.
SO CAN I COME BY AND PICK IT UP?
OR SHOULD I SAY ...
I'M...
...ALREADY HERE!

HEY, HEY, ISN'T THAT A LITTLE TOO MUCH?
glug glug glug
pa-chaff
pa-chaff
LOOK, SHINODA.
grab
TAKE IT EASY.
WHY AM I DRINKING WITH A GUY I MET JUST YESTERDAY?
glug
GEEZ, THIS KID...
RIGHT, RIGHT.
sniff
DRUG DEALERS DON'T "TAKE IT EASY," OKAY?
C'MON, DRINK UP. I BROUGHT OVER THE STUFF YOU ASKED FOR, AFTER ALL.

I'M GONNA BUM A SMOKE.
I MEAN, I'M JUST DOING EVERY-THING HIS WAY ...
!
WHAT?
OH, NOTHING
WHAT... WHAT IS THAT?
OH, ARE YOU LOOKING AT...
... THESE?
blink
hug
...
DO YOU WANNA KNOW?

HUH?
ARE ALL WRITERS LIKE THAT?
STOP BEING SO ROUND-ABOUT.
DO YOU WANT TO KNOW OR NOT?
SO?
WELL, I WON'T SAY NO, BUT... IT'S NONE OF MY BUSINESS ...
"SHINO," THE DRUG SCENE WRITER WHO'LL ONLY WRITE ABOUT DRUGS HE'S PERSONALLY TRIED...
HOW DO YOU KNOW WHAT I DO?
I KNOW EVERYTHING ABOUT YOU.

slam
bi-beep
EGO
OPEN 18 00
CLOSE 5 00
...

SIR
EGOIST
YOU ARE AWARE THAT IT IS WEDNESDAY NIGHT, YES?
WEDNESDAY NIGHT...
YEAH. I KNOW.
...
THAT WILL BE 10,000 YEN THEN.
WHAT ?!
SHUFF
THAT'S A STEEP COVER CHARGE.
WHAT IS IT, FOUR TIMES THE TYPICAL RATE?
SHF
HERE'S YOUR TICKET.

ENJOY YOUR-SELF.
KREEE
NO WONDER THIS RIP-OFF OF A CLUB ...
...HAS SO FEW CUSTOMERS.
WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH WEDNESDAY NIGHT?
DAMMIT, WHERE'S THE GUY FROM BEFORE?
YOU'RE FRIGGIN' LATE
Click

LET'S GO.
...
THEY'RE ALREADY STARTING.
SORRY, MAN.
!
I KNOW THERE WERE SOME GUYS HERE JUST A SECOND AGO...
WHAT THE--!

YOU ARE AWARE THAT IT IS WEDNESDAY NIGHT, YES?
THERE'S SOMETHING BEHIND THA--
A PASSAGE-WAY...?
!
!
YOU GOIN' IN OR NOT?
...

HM?
IT'S KATSUKI! WHAT THE HELL'S HE DOING HERE?
HE CAN'T BE THE ONE WHO GAVE THE KID A RIDE EARLIER... CAN HE?
KATSUKI TOLD YOU?
YUP. HE'S IN THE BUSINESS TOO, AFTER ALL.
HE TALKS ABOUT YOU ALL THE TIME.
OH.
THAT'S A LIE.
HUH?!
I THOUGHT I'D REALLY LIKE TO MEET YOU, SO I WENT OUT LAST NIGHT TO HAVE A LITTLE FUN..
...OH, OKAY ...
ACTUALLY, I READ YOUR ARTICLES AND REALLY LIKED THEM, SO I STARTED ASKING AROUND.
THAT WAS "A LITTLE FUN," HUH?
RRRing
!

MAKE SURE YOU DRINK THAT ALL UP!
YEAH, SURE.
OH...
I'M JUST GONNA STEP OUT FOR A SEC.
HUH?
IT'S LIKE MY BRAIN IS... FIZZY...
pasha
Whew
LOOKS LIKE THE BOOZE AND THE DRUGS ARE BOTH STARTING TO KICK IN ...
beep
Savior

HELLO ?
...HISATO.
"HISATO?"
HIS NAME IS HISATO?
YEAH.
REMEMBER THERE'S A TEST COMING UP.
SO WHO'S HE TALKING TO ON THE PHONE?
WE HAVE TO GO TO SCHOOL TOMORROW.
I'LL GO WITH YOU.
SURE. BUT...
DON'T COME HOME 'TIL MORNING.
...

I WON'T. GOOD NIGHT.
'NIGHT.
DEB
WHO'S THAT?
HM?
MY SLAVE.
...
HISATO? EVERY-THING OKAY?

A SECRET EVENT?
OPEN 18:00
CLOSE 5:00
THAT'S NOT WHAT I HEARD.
I HEARD YOU COULD GET SOME GOOD STUFF HERE ON WEDNESDAY NIGHTS.
THEN YOUR BUDDY'S BEEN SCREWIN' WITH YOU
THAT'S ONLY HALF-TRUE. THIS PLACE ISN'T THAT SIMPLE, AFTER ALL.
...
SO--
WHAT'S YOUR FRIEND'S NAME?
IS THERE SOME REASON I SHOULD TELL YOU?
YEAH, THERE IS.
PEOPLE IN A THING LIKE THIS ARE TOUCHY-- YOU DON'T GET IN UNLESS YOU'VE BEEN PROPERLY INTRODUCED.
YOU GOTTA BE KIDDIN' ME.

YOU THINK I'M GONNA TELL YOU THE NAME OF MY FRIEND, WHEN I'VE NEVER MET YOU BEFORE DO I LOOK CRAZY?
HOW DO I KNOW YOU'RE NOT A COP OR A NARC?
WELL, NOW.
YOU'RE PRETTY TOUCHY FOR SOMEONE GETTING THIS FAR.
hmph
DAMN RIGHT.
I'LL CHANGE THE QUESTION THEN.
WHAT'D YOUR "FRIEND" SAY YOU'D BE ABLE TO BUY HERE?
...
THE RED ONES.
GOT IT IN ONE.
REEEE

HEY...
WILL YOU WRITE SOME-THING ABOUT THESE?
208
Shinoda
THE RED ONES, I MEAN.
C'MON, GIVE ME A BREAK.
I DON'T WANT THE NCD BREATHIN' DOWN MY NECK ANY MORE. HEE HEE HEE.
YOU LOOK LIKE YOU'RE HAVING A GOOD TIME.
YEAH, THANKS TO YOU.
HEY, SHINODA.
SHF
ACTUALLY I WANTED TO REPAY THE FAVOR A BIT MORE.
OH NO, I THINK THIS PLUS THE BOOZE HAS YOU COVERED.
GIVE ME ONE.
SURE, HERE.

SAY "AAH."
...
Ohhh
HEY, KNOCK IF OFF. THAT TICKLES.
SLURP
...
SLF
I DON'T CARE IF IT'S WITH A GUY OR A GIRL, LONG AS IT FEELS GOOD.
YOU KNOW, I...

TELL ME WHAT YOU WANT.
I'LL GIVE YOU ANYTHING.
gulp
THAT WENT WELL.
HISATO ...
WHAT IS IT?
HEH.
OH... SHINODA ...
...
HAL... YOU'RE LATE...
CHAKK

LOOK AT THIS PUNK. HE REALLY WON'T SAY ANYTHING!
C'MON! FIGHT BACK A LITTLE!
SHIT, THIS IS BORING.
...
IF YOU'RE GONNA DO IT, DO IT QUICK.
SHUP
JUST LIKE THE RUMORS! HE'LL LET ANYONE GIVE IT A SHOT!
SHUU
HA HA HA HA
I HAVE NO BODY, NO MIND.
HA HA HA HA
HA HA HA HA

IF I DON'T RESIST, IT'S OVER MORE QUICKLY. I CAN'T RESIST.
IT'S POINT-LESS I WON'T DO IT.
wha
I HAVE NO MIND.
I HAVE NO BODY.
I JUST WANT IT TO BE OVER.
grab
klunk
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING?
I'M NOT HERE.
GANGING UP ON ONE GUY...
PRETTY DAMN VICIOUS.
tupp
tupp
I GUESS YOU'RE ALL GONNA HAVE TO SPEND ETERNITY AT THE BOTTOM OF THE CLASS.
kachik

MY SAVIOR.

LISTEN, HISATO.
YOU'RE GONNA LIVE.
YOU'RE NOT THE ONE THAT'S GONNA DIE.
YOU'RE A GOOD KID, HISATO.

IT'S OUR SECRET.
AND I'LL DO ANYTHING FOR YOU.

flip
WE'LL START SOON.
I'M THIRSTY.
GIMME A GLASS OF RED.
...
WHAD'YA THINK? GOOD TIMES, HUH?

FLOOR-TO-CEILING, EVERYTHING IN RED.
TRIP IN HERE AND YOU'RE IN ANOTHER WORLD, MAN.
...
sigh
SO WHERE'S THE "SECRET EVENT"?
THIS JUST LOOKS LIKE ANOTHER CLUB TO ME.
heh
EASY, EASY. THE MAIN EVENT HASN'T STARTED YET.
DO YOU NEED SOME ?
!
YEAH, HOOK US UP.
SHK
EXCUSE ME, SIR.

clatter clatter clatter
IT'S ABOUT TO START.
JUST WATCH.
WHAT THE HELL ...?

Act.36

clatter
clatter
HERE WE GO.
!

tunk
SKREEEEE
flutter flutter
SKREEEEE
flap

HEY.
pat
STREET
flutter
flutter
shik

!
IT'S OUR TURN.
FLAP
FLAP
KACHAK
SKREEK
slf
...
hup

ALL THE RED ...
AND ...
CHING
HERE'S TO MY PLACE.
...THAT SUPPORTS IT.
shlik
dkip dkip

SNIFF SNIFF
suu
gulPP
HISATO
THERE IT IS.
WAIT A SEC... OH...
sluff

WANNA TRY IT?
IT TAKES EFFECT A LOT FASTER.
NO ...
EVER SHOOT UP WITH ONE OF THESE ?
tick
tick
tick
zzzzz
jolt !
KACHAK

...
HAL ?!?
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
YOU LOOK PALE.
JUST LET ME REST FIRST.
I'M TIRED.
chink
WHAT ABOUT THE KID?
THEY'RE STILL IN SHINODA'S ROOM.
THOUGHT AS MUCH
HIS RIDE'LL BE THERE SOON. WAKE ME UP WHEN IT GETS THERE.
HUH? WHY?
HAL ?
...

ZZZZ
HE'S ALREADY ASLEEP...
Didn't even take his glasses off
shuff
THIS HAS TO BE THE FIRST TIME I'VE SEEN HIM BE THE FIRST TO GO TO SLEEP.
I WONDER WHAT HAPPENED.
twitch
ARE YOU GOING BACK?
...

YEAH, I HAVE SCHOOL.
IT'S YOUR FAULT FOR PUTTING SO DAMN MUCH IN THERE THAT I'M STILL UP.
WILL YOU AT LEAST HANG OUT UNTIL I GET TO SLEEP?
SU4
CAN'T. I'LL BE LATE.
BUT ...
IF YOU WANT MORE, JUST CALL ME.
MORE OF THE REDS? OR...
...OF YOU?
...

EITHER
KAGAN
!
IT'S THE SAME CAR THAT BROUGHT HIM HERE!

BUT...
I KNOW HE TOLD ME TO WAKE HIM UP...
WHAP
HELL, YOU SHOULD'VE STAYED WITH 'IM.
I HAVE SCHOOL TOMORROW.
SCHOOL, EH?
WHAT'S A DEALER NEED TO STUDY FOR?
I WANT TO GO TO COLLEGE.
OH HO!
GOT A PARTICULAR SCHOOL IN MIND?

THE SAME ONE SHOKI'S GOING TO.
DON'T CALL HIM THAT, KATSUKI!
AH... YEAH ...
SORRY ABOUT THAT. CHILL, MAN.
HE'S THE BEST IN THE SCHOOL, RIGHT?
ANYWAY, I'LL DO WHATEVER I CAN TO HELP OUT.
SMART SONUVABITCH CAN PROBABLY GO WHEREVER HE WANTS.
twitch
YOU GUYS GOT A BRIGHT FUTURE AHEAD, AFTER ALL.
WE DO ...?

YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT YOURSELF, RIGHT?
...
ARE YOU COMING NEXT WEDNES-DAY?
...
I'LL COME WHEN WE'RE DONE WITH WHAT WE'RE DOING NOW.
YEAH
...

VROOOM
WE BETTER PUT AN END TO THIS IN A HURRY.
click
...
...
kachik
shuff
shuff

...
glance
305
Akiyama
sulu
FACHAN
ROOM 305...
AKIYAMA ...
HISATO ...
...
HISATO AKIYAMA?

YOU'RE TOO LATE COMING HOME.
CLATTER
!
AND NOW THE DINNER I MADE YOU IS JUST GOING TO WASTE.
YOU REALLY ARE A TERRIBLE CHILD.
I'M ...
I-I'M SORRY
SHIVER
SHIVER
SSSS

SHLOK
THE REPORT.
SWAN
HUH ?
THE HOMEWORK THAT'S DUE TOMOR-ROW.
DID YOU DO IT?
!
THE REPORT, I SAID.
WHAT? IS THERE A PROBLEM ?
...
UMM.. NOTHING, REALLY.
SHU
C'MON, TELL ME. WE'LL LOOK FOR IT TOGETHER.
YOU LOOK LIKE YOU LOST SOME-THING.
NO, REALLY, IT'S NOTHING.

I'LL GET THE VACUUM.
SUU
SHOKI !
SHOKI ...
DID YOU DO ANY RED?
I CLEAN UP OFTEN ENOUGH, BUT I CAN STILL SEE DUST IF I LOOK CLOSELY.
I'M ALREADY LATE, SO LET'S DO THE CLEANING TOMORROW.
SUU
AND ANYWAY ...
FLAP
YOU'RE GOING TO TELL ME WHAT THE HOMEWORK WAS, RIGHT?
Here.
YEAH... SPEAKING OF THAT--

WHY'D YOU COME BACK?
UM, WELL, I DID WHAT YOU TOLD ME TO DO, SO...
YEAH ?
THAT'S GOOD THEN.
grin
SUU
SHOKI ...?
IT'S... IT'S OKAY FOR ME...
...TO STAY HERE, RIGHT ?
HA'K
WHAT'RE YOU TALKING ABOUT ?

THIS IS OUR CASTLE, RIGHT?
WE DON'T NEED TO WORRY. EVERYTHING IS GOING WELL.
MMPH
RRiiiing
RRiiiing
RRiiiing
DAMN.. DROPPED TOO MUCH LAST NIGHT.. GOD, THIS HEADACHE..
PARTIED TOO HARD, DRANK TOO MUCH, MAYBE..
HELLO..?
MAN, YOUR VOICE SOUNDS LIKE CRAP.

KATSUKI ...?
THE ONE 'N ONLY.
!
OH, AT THE HOTEL?
ABOUT THE NIGHT BEFORE LAST...
UH, LOOK ...
SO WHILE WE'RE ON THE SUBJECT, I CALLED TO ASK YOU A FAVOR...
A FAVOR?
SMACKING YOUR FRIENDS... I WASN'T THINKING STRAIGHT
I'M SORRY, MAN.
NAH, I SHOULDN'T HAVE BROUGHT YOU ALONG WITHOUT TELLING YOU WHAT WAS UP.

I WANT YOU TO WRITE A PIECE ABOUT THE RED.
!
zzz zzz zzz
...
zzz
shhP
!!
ONE O'CLOCK
...
zzz
shhf

buzz
zzz
nyam nyam
zzz
THAT SONUVA --!
buzz
zzz
zzz
fwip
I FRIGGIN' TOLD YOU TO WAKE ME UP, DIDN'T I?!
DO YOUR GOD-DAMN EARS...
...EVEN LEAD TO YOUR BRAIN?!
UNGGH
BUT... BUT...
aah
I TOTALLY HAVE THEM!
?
stomp
stomp
OH, BUT --!
DAM-MIT
Cheeks have been finished
swiff
swiff
BUT THE CAR SHOWED UP SO SUDDENLY
AND YOU'D ONLY JUST GONE TO SLEEP!

PICTURES OF THAT BOY'S APARTMENT AND THE CAR THAT PICKED HIM UP!
tee hee
good, aren't I?
wag
wag
...
WELL, AT LEAST YOU DID THAT MUCH.
!
help
BUT... WELL...
beep
beep
beep
BLINK
THIS AIN'T BAD FOR A TYPICAL GOOD-FOR-NOTHIN' ...
THAT'S THE FIRST TIME HAL'S EVER SAID ANYTHING NICE TO ME!
I'LL DO BETTER!
WAAAAH
shiver
yeah, yeah
EVEN IF IT GETS YOU KILLED, PROBABLY.
beep

...THAT THESE GUYS ARE PLANNING?
WHAT IS IT...
...
WHAT, NOBODY?
MEGURO EAST HIGH SCHOOL
SUU
MR. TADA.
NOBODY CAN GIVE ME THE ANSWER TO A PROBLEM THIS EASY?
KASA-HARA.
UWWER
NOBODY CAN ANSWER THAT QUESTION.

THERE'S A MISTAKE IN THE PROBLEM AS YOU WROTE IT.
WHAK
OH!
SORRY 'BOUT THAT.
oops.

WOW, GETTING MR. TADA ALL FREAKED OUT LIKE THAT...
YOU'VE GOT SOME BALLS!
CAN'T BELIEVE YOU STAYED SO COOL!
I JUST SAID WHAT EVERYBODY WAS THINKING.
ANY-WAY ...

SIX.
SEVEN.
THREE.
WHAT'RE THE RESULTS THIS WEEK?
JUST... THREE?
I COULDN'T MAKE IT TO THE RED PARTY.
AH.
YOU'RE NOT GONNA ASK ABOUT HIS RESULTS?
...NO.
WELL, THAT CAN'T BE HELPED.
HEY, KASA-HARA...
DO YOUR BEST NEXT TIME.

HISATO'S GOT A DIFFERENT JOB AT THE MOMENT.
HUH.
YAK
YAK
YAK
YAK
YAK
DOES THIS REALLY HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH THE RED?
SO WILL YOU WRITE ME AN ARTICLE ABOUT THE RED?
Four Dead in Meguro Murders: Drugs May Be Involved
THERE IT IS.
THE MURDER-SUICIDE SIX MONTHS AGO.
SOMY

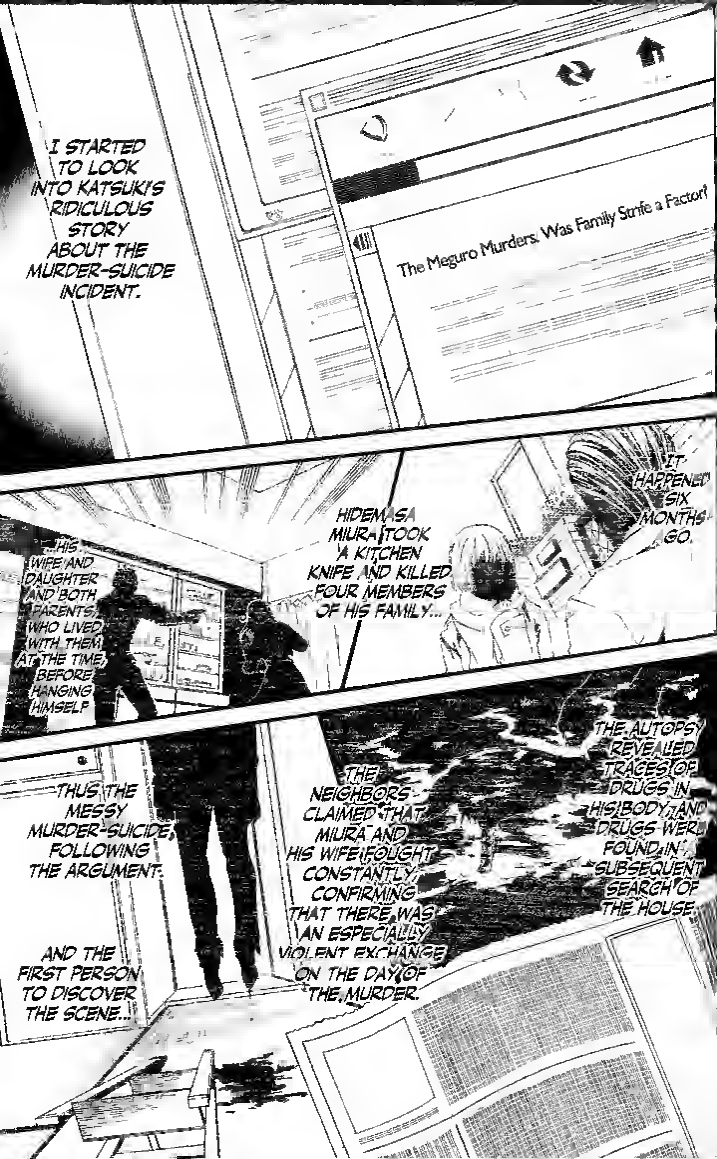
HUH?
ACTUALLY, I TOOK THE JOB ON MYSELF, BUT MY PLATE'S REALLY FULL RIGHT NOW...
AND SINCE YOU JUST GOT OUT OF THE JOINT...
I THOUGHT YOU COULD PROBABLY USE THE CASH.
THAT'S A NASTY WAY OF PUTTING IT.
YOU TRIED THE STUFF YOU BOUGHT FROM HISATO, RIGHT?
WELL ... YEAH ...
BUT IT WASN'T AN ESPECIALLY INTERESTING UPPER, REALLY.
DISK
I TRIED THE PILLS AND SHOT SOME UP, BUT THERE WASN'T A BIG DIFFERENCE.
IT JUST DOESN'T SEEM LIKE A DRUG WORTH WRITING ABOUT.
THAT'S NOT WHAT'S INTERESTING ABOUT THE DRUG.
DO YOU REMEMBER THAT MURDER-SUICIDE IN MEGURO ABOUT SIX MONTHS BACK?
YEAH... SOME ADDICT KILLED HIS FAMILY AND COMMITTED SUICIDE.
THAT'S THE ONE.

THEY FOUND LOADS OF THE RED IN THE GUYS HOUSE.
HM? I DUNNO, THAT SOUNDS FISHY TO ME.
OF COURSE I DO.
YOU GOT A SOURCE FOR THAT?
WHAT'S MORE, THERE WAS A SURVIVOR.
SURE, SURE.
I GOT IT, I GOT IT.
LOOK INTO IT, MAN, SERIOUSLY!
IF YOU DON'T BELIEVE ME, TALK TO THE KID.
HUH ?
WHAT'RE YOU...?
IT CAN'T BE...
I WAS GONNA ASK YOU TO DO THIS JOB ALL ALONG
THAT'S WHY I HAD YOU MEET HIM.

HISATO.
THAT MURDERING JUNKIE WAS HIS DAD.

Act.37

TAK
TAK
TAK
...
clik


I STARTED TO LOOK INTO KATSUKI'S RIDICULOUS STORY ABOUT THE MURDER-SUICIDE INCIDENT.
The Meguro Murders: Was Family Strife a Factor?
IT HAPPENED SIX MONTHS AGO.
HIDEMASA MIURA TOOK A KITCHEN KNIFE AND KILLED FOUR MEMBERS OF HIS FAMILY...
...HIS WIFE AND DAUGHTER AND BOTH PARENTS, WHO LIVED WITH THEM AT THE TIME, BEFORE HANGING HIMSELF.
THE AUTOPSY REVEALED TRACES OF DRUGS IN HIS BODY, AND DRUGS WERE FOUND IN SUBSEQUENT SEARCH OF THE HOUSE.
THE NEIGHBORS CLAIMED THAT MIURA AND HIS WIFE FOUGHT CONSTANTLY, CONFIRMING THAT THERE WAS AN ESPECIALLY VIOLENT EXCHANGE ON THE DAY OF THE MURDER.
THUS THE MESSY MURDER-SUICIDE FOLLOWING THE ARGUMENT.
AND THE FIRST PERSON TO DISCOVER THE SCENE...

...WAS THEIR OLDEST SON, A 16-YEAR-OLD BOY.
SO AFTER HE ATTEMPTS SUICIDE HIMSELF BECAUSE OF THE SHOCK, HE BECOMES A DEALER?
IF SO, THAT WOULD EXPLAIN HIS DEGENERATE LIFE... ALSO...
KRRK
NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT, WAS THAT...
...PART OF HIS JOB TOO?
WHAT A HERO.

throb
IS THIS GODAWFUL HEADACHE A SIDE EFFECT?
MY TEMPLES ARE THROBBING ...
DAMN.
UGH!
GUESS I'LL TAKE SOME HEADACHE MEDS AND HIT THE SACK.
OR...
shik
I COULD TAKE SOME MORE STUFF AND DIVE INTO THE WORK.
...

SO WHAT'S HE DOING?
DOESN'T LOOK LIKE HE'S GOING ANYWHERE TODAY.
GOOD TIME TO PUT OUR INFORMATION IN ORDER.
ANYWAY
shake shake
...!
DID YOU LISTEN THE WHOLE TIME THE KID WAS SCORING WITH SHINODA?
WE HAVE TO GO TO SCHOOL TOMORROW.
I'LL GO WITH YOU.
SURE, BUT...
IT HAS EVERYTHING TO DO WITH IT, IDIOT.
'CAUSE, I MEAN
I DON'T THINK IT HAD ANYTHING TO DO WITH THE INVESTIGATION, SO
klik

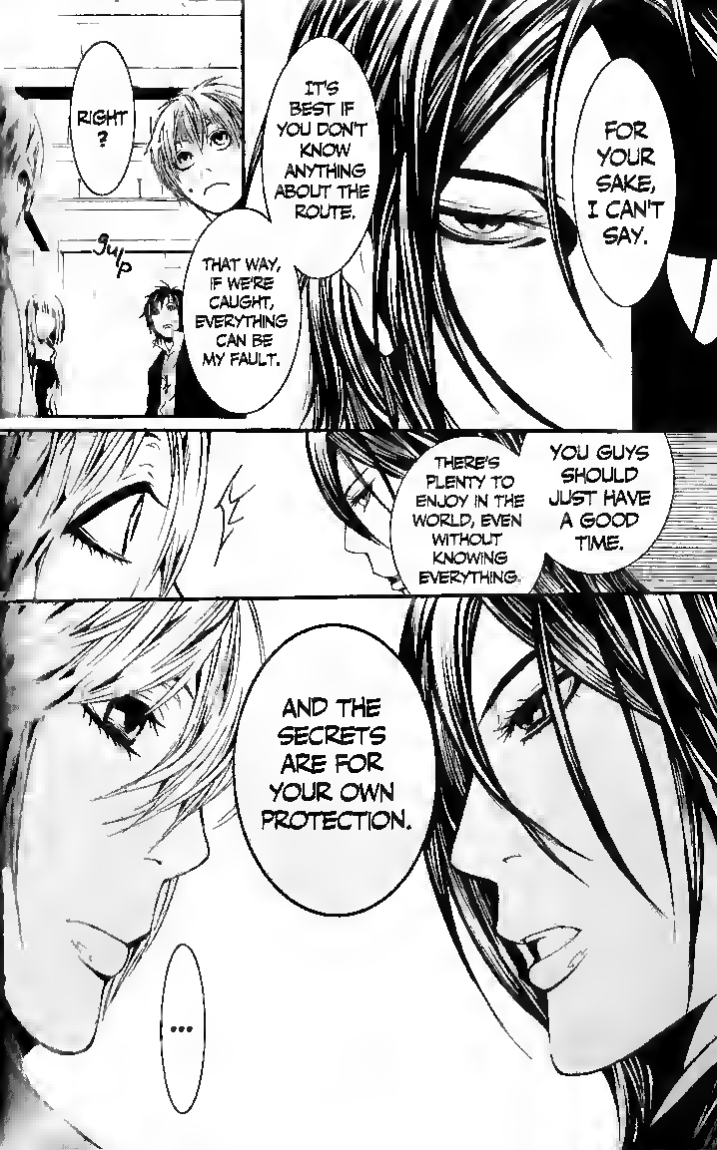
IT'S ABOUT SCHOOL... SO I FIGURED IT WAS JUST A FRIEND.
HUH?
WHO'S HE TALKING TO ON THE PHONE HERE?
...DON'T COME HOME 'TILL MORNING
221
BEEP
TELL ME WHAT YOU WANT. I'LL GIVE YOU ANYTHING.
AND THEN, RIGHT AFTER THIS PHONE CALL --
BEEP
WHIRRRR
IT SOUNDS TO ME LIKE HE'S GIVING ORDERS.
YOU THINK "JUST A FRIEND" WOULD TELL HIM WHEN TO COME HOME?
WHICH MEANS WHOEVER HE WAS TALKING TO ON THE PHONE
...PROBABLY HAS A PART TO PLAY IN ALL OF THIS.
AND THREE MINUTES LATER, HE JUMPS SHINODA.
!

THEY'RE ALL CONNECTED BY THE RED...
shuf
shuf
SHINODA, KATSUKI, HISATO, THE PHONE MAN, THE MURDER-SUICIDE..
AND I'M GONNA PULL IT ALL UP BY THE ROOTS.
THERE'S A GPS TRACKER ON HIS CAR.
IF ANYTHING CHANGES HERE, CALL ME.
OKAY.
suu
DO YOU KNOW WHERE HE IS?
I'M GONNA KEEP FOLLOWING KATSUKI.
YOU STAY HERE AND WATCH TO SEE IF ANYTHING CHANGES WITH SHINODA AND THE KID.

WHAT ARE THE SALES FOR THIS MONTH?
INCLUDING THE PARTY, 3.28 MILLION YEN.
THAT WILL DO. WELL DONE, EVERY-BODY.
I LOOK FORWARD TO NEXT MONTH.

WE'LL DEPOSIT YOUR COMPENSATION IN THE USUAL ACCOUNTS
IS IT REALLY OKAY ..?
SELLING ONLY TO CERTAIN BUYERS, KEEPING THE REST PARTYING ALL THE TIME ..
JUST MAKING MONEY SO EASILY
IT'S NONSENSE TO THINK THAT YOU HAVE TO SUFFER TO MAKE MONEY.
AND THERE'S PLENTY OF RISK IN SELLING ANY KIND OF DRUGS.
SO THIS IS JUST REASONABLE RECOMPENSE.
RISK ?
IT'S A RUSH. I'D PAY FOR IT.
THANKS TO YOU, SHOKI, I CAN HAVE ANYTHING I WANT.
I'M GRATEFUL YOU INVITED ME.
NO.

IT WOULD HAVE BEEN IMPOSSIBLE FOR ME TO DO ALONE.
THIS IS ALL THANKS TO YOUR COOPER-ATION.
YOU HAVE MY GRATITUDE.
STILL, WHERE DID YOU MANAGE TO FIND THE CLIENT LIST AND THAT MUCH PRODUCT ?
SHHHH


FOR YOUR SAKE, I CAN'T SAY.
IT'S BEST IF YOU DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THE ROUTE.
THAT WAY, IF WE'RE CAUGHT, EVERYTHING CAN BE MY FAULT.
RIGHT ?
Gulp
YOU GUYS SHOULD JUST HAVE A GOOD TIME.
THERE'S PLENTY TO ENJOY IN THE WORLD, EVEN WITHOUT KNOWING EVERYTHING.
AND THE SECRETS ARE FOR YOUR OWN PROTECTION.
...

WE'LL DO IT TOGETHER.
...HUH?
Grab
IF WE STICK TOGETHER WE'LL BE FINE
BUT WE NEED A LOT TO STAY ALIVE, DON'T WE?
SO, HISATO...
Pitter Patter
TELL ME WHAT YOU WANT.

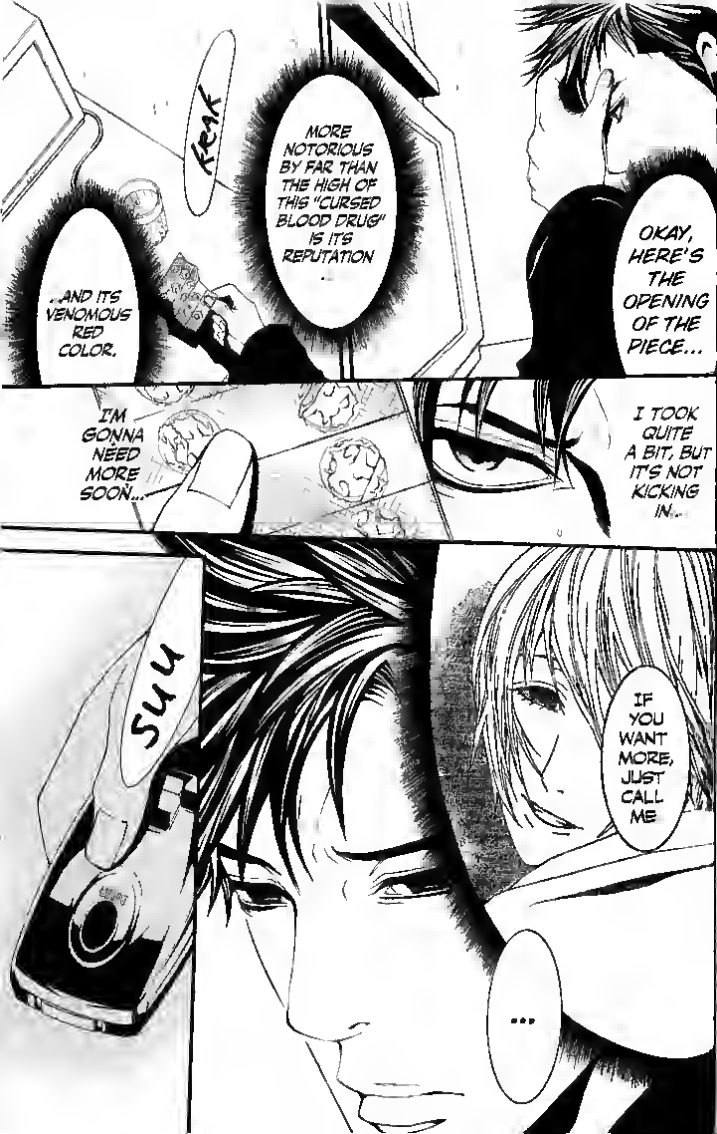
I'LL GIVE YOU EVERY-THING ..
YEAH ?
IT'S ME.
"SHALL WE GET TOGETHER SOMETIME SOON?"
YEAH, WE SHOULD.

"I WAS JUST THINKING THE SAME THING."
WHEN I'VE GOT MORE STOCK, I'LL COME AND GET YOU.
YEAH.
VROOM
...

HEY.
YOU KATSUKI ?
YEAH.
FOR YOU.
...

OH, HE'S DOIN' GREAT.
ALSO, THEY SAID TO ASK HOW THE KID'S DOING.
HE'S MOVING A LOT MORE PRODUCT THAN A KID LIKE HIM OUGHTA BE ABLE TO.
...
click
...

klik klik
klik
klik
klik
fssh
sigh
...
suu
guess this is as far as I'm gonna get on the net.
can't help that it happened half a year ago.


OKAY, HERE'S THE OPENING OF THE PIECE...
I TOOK QUITE A BIT, BUT IT'S NOT KICKING IN...
I'M GONNA NEED MORE SOON...
FREAK
MORE NOTORIOUS BY FAR THAN THE HIGH OF THIS "CURSED BLOOD DRUG" IS ITS REPUTATION
...AND ITS VENOMOUS RED COLOR.
IF YOU WANT MORE, JUST CALL ME
...
SU4

I WAS GONNA ASK YOU TO DO THIS JOB ALL ALONG.
THAT MURDERING JUNKIE WAS HIS DAD.
YEAH, YEAH.
YESTERDAY WAS A ONE-TIME THING.
!
WHADDYA THINK YOU'RE DOING, CALLING THE KID?
klak
Hisato
IF I TALK TO HIM DIRECTLY, IT'LL REALLY IMPROVE THE ARTICLE, NATURALLY.
chik
ka-
IT DOESN'T MATTER IF HE'S CARRYING. IT'D JUST BE A WAY BETTER STORY IF I TALK TO SOMEONE WHO WAS INVOLVED.
beep
THIS IS FOR WORK.
WHAT I WANT ISN'T THE RED.

I JUST NEED THE DRUGS AND THE INFORMATION HE HAS.
I'LL BE WAITING.
YEAH, I JUST GOT TO THE PARKING LOT.
SOMEONE CAME TO GET HIM? THE KID AGAIN...?
YEAH, THAT ONE'S DEFINITELY THE KID...
BUT THE OTHER ONE...?

THEY'RE TOO FAR OUT. I CAN'T MAKE OUT THE FACE...
GUESS THERE'S NO OTHER WAY.
Suu
NOW, SO KATSUKI DOESN'T BLOW MY COVER...
ERRING
Sacrifice.
...
Suu

HISATO ?
...
HE'S CALLING.
I SEE.
...
IN THAT CASE, WE'LL TAKE YOU THERE FIRST.
YOU NEEDN'T COME BACK UNTIL IT'S OVER.
!
THAT VOICE!
OKAY ...

...
SHOKI.
THE GUY ON THE PHONE!

suu
THAT'S DEFINITELY THE VOICE I HEARD ON THE PHONE
click
YEAH, THESE GUYS ARE DEFINITELY WORKING TOGETHER
slerrrp
...

jolt
SHINODA'S MOVING!
HISATO ...?
SHINODA? WHAT'S UP?
UH, YEAH ...
ACTUALLY, I'VE GOT A BIT OF A FAVOR TO ASK...
I, UH... KINDA RAN OUT OF THE RED..
SIGH
ALREADY? ISN'T THAT A LITTLE FAST?
ARE YOU GONNA BE OKAY?
YEAH... ALSO...
I KINDA, UH... WANTED TO ASK YOU SOME-THING....
SO... COULD WE MEET UP?
...

WAIT FOR ME.
I WANTED TO SEE YOU TOO.
SURE.
VROOOOM
HEH.
...
SLAM
KACHAK

Suu
!
...
Suu

...
WE CAN GO.
'KAY.
VROOM
THAT CAR AGAIN.
BUT ...
WHO WAS RIDING IN THE BACK SEAT?
SUU
CHINK
THE DRUGS?
IN THE SAME COIN LOCKER AS ALWAYS
THAT KID REALLY DOES DO WHATEVER YOU TELL HIM TO.
...

USING THAT PRETTY FACE, CONTROLLING PEOPLE TO DO WHATEVER YOU WANT WITH NOTHING MORE THAN A KIND WORD...
...MUST BE A GOOD TIME.
CONTROL-LING?
DON'T MISUNDER-STAND ME, PLEASE.
I'M JUST TELLING PEOPLE WHAT THEY WANT TO HEAR.
AND IN EXCHANGE FOR THAT...
WHAT'S WRONG WITH GETTING WHAT I WANT IN RETURN?

Act.38

GOTCHA.
THE DRUGS ARE IN THE USUAL LOCKER.
IF I WERE TO ASK YOU, WOULD I BE ABLE TO GET SOME OF THE RED STUFF?
THE KEY YOU GAVE TO THAT GUY A SECOND AGO...
THERE'S A BUNCH OF DRUGS IN THAT LOCKER, RIGHT?
...
GO HOME, KID.
... SAY.
IF I WERE TO TALK ABOUT INCREASING THE COST OF DOING BUSINESS WHILE DECREASING SALES FOR YOUR NETWORK OF BUYERS...

WOULD YOU BE INTERESTED?
I CAN MOVE A LOT MORE PRODUCT THAN THAT OTHER GUY.
ABOUT HOW MANY REGULAR CUSTOMERS DOES HE HAVE?
FIFTY PLUS.
I'VE GOT HIM CARRYING A CELL PHONE WITH THE NUMBERS OF ALL OUR CUSTOMERS ON IT.
WHAT ABOUT NEW CUSTOMERS?
I DON'T LEAVE THAT TO HIM.
THERE'S AN IRANIAN OR SOMEBODY DIRECTLY UNDER THE BIG GUY THAT JUST SELLS ON THE STREET.
I WAS THINKING ...
slurp
slurp
slurp
slurp

IT MIGHT BE TOO SCARY FOR SOME PEOPLE, BUYING FROM A FOR-EIGNER.
WE SHOULD MAKE IT EASIER FOR NEW CUSTOMERS TO BUY.
HOW?
HAVE THE DEALERS BE YOUNGER.
AND JAPANESE-- IN THEIR LATE TEENS.
TEEN-AGERS?
THEY WON'T SEEM LIKE A DEALER, AND THEY'LL DO THE JOB FOR BARELY MORE THAN THEIR ALLOWANCE, WHICH BRINGS OUR COSTS WAY DOWN.
IS IT SAFE?
WE WON'T TELL THEM ANYTHING, SO THEY WON'T BE ABLE TO SPILL ON US.
IF THE BROKER THAT WORKS ABOVE YOU WILL GIVE THE OKAY, I CAN HAVE A GROUP TOGETHER VERY QUICKLY.
...
WHAT IS IT... THAT YOU'RE AFTER?
HUH?

MONEY, OF COURSE.
Jink Jink
WHAT'S A KID LIKE YOU NEED THAT KIND OF MONEY FOR?
... sigh
WELL, I'M GOING TO COLLEGE.
Pupp
!
COLLEGE ?!
AND THERE'S LIVING EXPENSES, RENT, ELECTRICITY. PLUS, THE TUITION FOR THE SCHOOL I'M AT NOW IS NO JOKE ..
NOW WAIT JUST A MINUTE!
ARE YOU STUPID?
WHADDYA MEAN, "WHY"? JUST GET YOUR FOLKS TO PAY AND...
WHY?
MY PARENTS ?

NOW YOU'RE THE ONE BEING STUPID.
DON'T LABOR UNDER THE MISCONCEPTION THAT EVERY PARENT IN THIS WORLD TAKES GOOD CARE OF THEIR CHILDREN.
YOU NEED ALL KINDS OF THINGS JUST TO LIVE A NORMAL LIFE.
AND MOST OF THEM YOU CAN GET WITH MONEY. WHEN I GRADUATE HIGH SCHOOL, I WANT TO GO TO COLLEGE.
I'M JUST CHOOSING THE MOST EXPEDIENT WAY TO DO THAT.
YOU'RE DOING IT BECAUSE YOU'RE SHORT ON CASH TOO, RIGHT?
LIKE, WHAT, YOUR DAY JOB DOESN'T CUT IT?
Grit

...
WE'RE HERE, SHOKI. YOUR "CASTLE."
SKREE
NOT REALLY... JUST SOME BAD MEMORIES, THAT'S ALL.
KACHUK
WHAT'S THE MATTER? YOU SOUND PRETTY IRRITATED ...
I KNOW ALL ABOUT YOU--
GRAB
I HEARD THE TAKE FOR THIS WEEK'S EVENT WAS AMAZING.
URRRR
KATUNK
DON'T SWEAT IT
WEDNESDAY WILL BE HERE SOON.
!
NEXT WEDNESDAY... OUR SACRIFICE WILL BE ON THE ALTAR.
THE BOSS WAS PRETTY HAPPY, IMPRESSED THAT A KID LIKE YOU COULD PULL IT OFF

--THAT YOU'RE A MUCH SMALLER MAN THAN YOU SEEM.
WOULDN'T EVEN A MAN LIKE THAT BE AN OBSTACLE FOR YOU?
!
klik
YOU... TALK TOO MUCH, KID.
THIS APARTMENT... THIS IS THE PLACE.
VROOM

THIS IS WHERE THAT KID THAT KAI FOLLOWED LIVES!
VROOOM
GUESS THEY'RE LIVING TOGETHER
...
...
sluff
!
sluff
sluff
sluff
YOU CERTAINLY BROUGHT A LOT OVER..
I FIGURED IT'D BE ROUGH ON YOU IF YOU RAN OUT

HUH?
...I MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO COME OVER ANY MORE, SOON.
THIS... IT'S ALL THE RED?
YOU TRYING TO GET ME ADDICTED?
NO, NO, ONLY ...
NOW, LOOK ...
OH, NEVER MIND.
SO C'MON, DOWN THE HATCH!
IF YOU GET TOO OBSESSED WITH SOMETHING, OTHER STUFF TURNS INVISIBLE.
THAT'S NOT GOOD FOR A WRITER.
ARE YOU ALWAYS LIKE THAT, SHINODA?
YOU NEVER GET STUCK ON SOMETHING OR OBSESSED WITH SOMETHING?
YOU CAN DRINK OR GET HIGH, BUT DON'T LET THE STUFF TAKE OVER.
IT'S ALL ABOUT MODERATION.

REALLY ?
fuu
!
I THINK YOU SHOULD LET YOURSELF GO, JUST ONCE.
GET SO HIGH YOU SEE HEAVEN—SEE SOMETHING NO ONE'S SEEN BEFORE—THEN WRITE ABOUT THAT.
...
I THINK YOU'RE CONFUSING IT WITH HELL THAT RED YOU HAVE... IT DOESN'T AGREE WITH ME, I DON'T THINK.
I HAD THE WORST HEAD-ACHE ...
LIKE I SAID ...
I BROUGHT EXTRA SO IT WOULDN'T BE SO BAD WHEN YOU RUN OUT!
sluff
YEAH, I GOT THAT.

I TOLD YOU I HAD A FAVOR TO ASK.
THIS ...
THIS IS DOUBLE THE AMOUNT, UM...
WHAT'S THIS?
SUU
GRIP
!
I WANT YOU TO TELL ME WHERE YOU GOT THESE SCARS.
!

WHAT?
flip
EARLIER YOU SAID SOMETHING ABOUT PRIVACY, AND YOU DIDN'T ASK...
SO WHY NOW?
BECAUSE NOW I PLAN TO LEARN ABOUT YOUR PRIVATE LIFE.
I WANT TO WRITE AN ARTICLE...ABOUT THE MURDER-SUICIDE THAT HAPPENED SIX MONTHS AGO.
!
HISATO!
WHO TOLD YOU...
KAT-SUKI...
I HATE HIM...
WHAM
DON'T JUST PRY...
...INTO PEOPLE'S LIVES...
sigh

YOU CAN'T EVER ...
...GO BACK ONCE YOU KNOW.
VZZZ
HMMM ...
LOOKS LIKE THE ONLY PEOPLE TO CONTACT SHINODA HAVE BEEN THIS HISATO AKIYAMA AND KATSUKI
DO YOU HAVE THEIR BACK-GROUNDS ?
YEAH.

FLIP
TADASHI KATSUKI, 29. PREVIOUSLY EMPLOYED AT A PUBLISHING COMPANY, NOW A FREELANCE WRITER.
FRIENDS WITH SHINODA SINCE THEIR COLLEGE DAYS, HE MOSTLY WRITES ABOUT DRUGS AND SUBCULTURE.
HE'S NOT AS FAMOUS AS SHINODA. AND THEN—
HISATO AKIYAMA, THE KID MET SHINODA THROUGH KATSUKI AND STARTED SELLING HIM THE RED...
HE'S 17, A SENIOR AT MEGURO EAST HIGH SCHOOL. HIS PARENTS DIVORCED A FEW YEARS AGO, AND NOW HE LIVES WITH HIS MOM IN AN APARTMENT IN MEGURO.
AT LEAST THAT'S THE STORY, BUT APPARENTLY THE NEIGHBORS HAVEN'T SEEN HIS MOTHER IN SOME TIME. PLUS...
SHH
...ACCORDING TO HAL'S REPORT, THIS GUY'S LIVING THERE TOO.
WHO'S THIS?
NAME'S "SHOKI." WE DON'T HAVE DETAILS ON HIM YET, BUT—
WE KNOW HE'S GIVEN INSTRUCTIONS TO HISATO AKIYAMA VIA CELL PHONE, AND ALSO THAT HE, AKIYAMA AND KATSUKI WERE ALL IN THE SAME PLACE AT ONCE.
HM... THIS FACE ...

I FEEL LIKE I'VE SEEN IT... SOMEWHERE...
KACHAK
GOOD WORK, EVERYBODY!
TAK
TAK
AH, ISOBE
THAT'S GOOD TO HEAR.
THERE'S BEEN SOME PROGRESS IN THE CASE, SO I'M FINALLY HERE TO REPORT.
IT WAS A REAL ROUGH JOB.
DIDN'T GET ANYTHING AT FIRST.
HOW'S SECTION 2'S INVESTIGATION INTO THE RED GOING?
SUU
WE'RE FLUSHING OUT THE CONNECTIONS OF MIURA, THE GUY THAT DID THE MURDER-SUICIDE, AND THE IRANIAN WE THINK WAS INVOLVED WITH HIM.

WE KNOW THERE ARE SEVERAL PEOPLE BEING USED AS GOFERS... THEY SEEM TO THINK THEY'RE BEING WATCHED AND DON'T HAND GOODS OVER DIRECTLY
ANYWAY, THEY PASS ENVELOPES ALONG, AND THAT'S IT.
ENVE-LOPES ...
THERE'RE A LOT OF GOFERS, AND THE FREQUENCY OF HANDOFFS IS VERY RANDOM, SO WE HAVEN'T IDENTIFIED THEM ALL.
BUT THIS GUY.
SUU
HE'S JUST ONE GUY WE WERE FOLLOWING, BUT DURING OUR OBSERVATION WE SPOTTED KURABAYASHI FROM SECTION 1.
kinda surprisin'
WHICH MEANS ...
...THAT KATSUKI'S THE SOURCE FOR THE RED .?
GASP
WHOAH!

WHERE'D YOU GET THIS PICTURE?
WHY IS THIS KID WITH KATSUKI ...?
YOU MEAN HISATO AKIYAMA?
HISATO AKIYAMA?
NO, I MEAN THIS ONE WITH THE BLACK HAIR...
SUU
THIS IS SHOKI KASAHARA.
"SHOKI ..."
SKUFF
OH, SORRY... AFTER THE INCIDENT HE WAS TAKEN IN BY RELATIVES AND CHANGED HIS FAMILY NAME.
SUU
HE WAS FORMERLY SHOKI MIURA.
THE FIRST PERSON TO DISCOVER THE MURDER-SUICIDE AND THE STEPSON OF THE MURDERER, HIDEMASA MIURA.

chirp
I CAN'T GO IN...
chirp chirp
...ANY FURTHER ...
DON'T JUST STAND THERE! YOU'RE IN MY GODDAMN WAY!
whomp
UGH!
...
koff

YOU GOT A PROB-LEM?
... WHAT'RE YOU LOOKIN' AT?
YOU LITTLE PUNK!
IT'S YOUR OWN DAMN FAULT!
SO CLEAN IT UP!

EIGHTY POINTS? GOOD FOR YOU, KAZUMI!
ha ha ha
AND WHAT ABOUT YOUR SON?
OH... SHOKI'S HOPELESS ...
I GUESS HE ONLY GOT HIS FATHER'S WEAK BRAINS.
...
HA HA HA HA HA
I SEE... IT'S MY FAULT. ...
I HAVE TO BE A BETTER SON...

THEN EVERY-ONE WILL LOVE ME...
KATUNK
WHFF
WHFF
SHUFF
WHFF
SUH
RED PILLS ...?
YOU LITTLE ...
!
!
WHOK
DON'T YOU TOUCH MY STASH, YOU LITTLE PUNK!

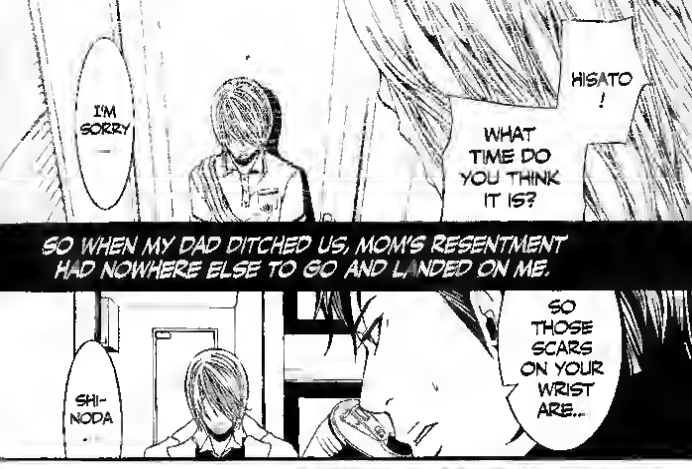
thud
NO MATTER HOW GOOD I AM, THIS IS NO PLACE FOR ME...
NO ONE WILL HELP ME.
I HAVE TO MAKE IT FOR MYSELF.
I HAVE TO...
SAME LOCKER AS ALWAYS.
GOT-CHA.
SAY ...
nka

I CAN MOVE A LOT MORE PRODUCT THAN THAT OTHER GUY.
HUFF ...
chirp
HUFF ...
chirp
HUFF ...
chirp
chirp

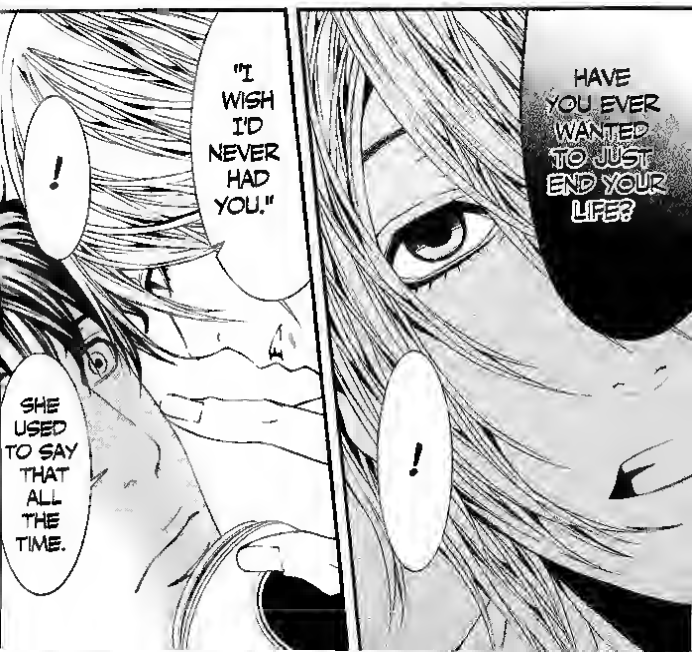
sluk
AH ...
AAH HA HA HA HA HA
AHA HA ...
HA HA ...
sluff
HOW MANY YEARS HAS IT BEEN... SINCE I'VE REALLY LAUGHED, FROM DEEP IN MY GUT?

HA-HAK
HA-HAK
GULP
I'M SO GLAD...
...THEY DIED.
IF THEY HADN'T, I WOULDVE.

AND I STILL THINK SO.
THAT WASN'T A TRAGEDY.
SHU
PASHIK
FOR AS LONG AS I COULD REMEMBER, MY PARENTS WERE ALWAYS FIGHTING.
WHAT TIME DO YOU THINK IT IS?
WORK KEPT ME LATE— WHAT COULD I DO?
...
YOU WENT TO THAT WOMAN'S PLACE.
DON'T THINK I DON'T KNOW ALL ABOUT IT!



SO WHEN MY DAD DITCHED US, MOM'S RESENTMENT HAD NOWHERE ELSE TO GO AND LANDED ON ME.



...
SHE SAID IT FOR YEARS.
AND I STARTED TO WANT TO DO IT. IT WAS WEIRD...
NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT, ALL I THOUGHT ABOUT WAS DYING.
I JUST WANTED IT ALL TO BE OVER.
I'M NOT HERE.
I JUST WANT IT TO BE OVER SOON.
AND THEN...
...HE APPEARED.

HE?
WHAT THE ...?
SHINODA ?
HISATO ...
SPLASH
SLLLLL

suu
LOOKS LIKE THE DRUGS KICKED IN.
klunk
GOOD NIGHT.

rustle
...
KACHAK
rustle

katunk
beep
YEAH ?
COME PICK ME UP.
ALL RIGHT.
...
beep
suu

Help
KACHAK